

resistance, which could make common procedures more dangerous by making current infection treatments ineffective; challenges like skyrocketing drug costs and pharmaceutical companies who game the FDA approval system to keep more affordable drugs off the market; and challenges like improving health equity.

I have repeatedly raised the need for the FDA to improve diversity in clinical trials because, when women or people of color or others are left out of the clinical trials, this undermines people's health by delaying information they and their healthcare providers need to understand how a treatment will affect them specifically—for example, whether it is safe during pregnancy—and by making it hard to identify differences in the safety and effectiveness of treatments for those populations.

As the hard-working staff at the FDA continues to tackle these challenges, they deserve a Senate-confirmed leader with experience on these issues to lead those efforts. Dr. Califf worked on these challenges before, when he was previously confirmed to lead FDA in an overwhelming bipartisan vote, and he demonstrated in his hearing with the HELP Committee that he is ready to take them on again and return as Commissioner.

So I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting to confirm Dr. Califf and working with him to ensure that the FDA continues to protect our families, uphold the gold standard of safety and effectiveness, and put science and data first.

I yield the floor.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 668, Robert McKinnon Califf, of North Carolina, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.

Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Richard Blumenthal, Gary C. Peters, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Richard J. Durbin, Sherrod Brown, Tammy Duckworth, Tim Kaine, Mazie Hirono, Alex Padilla, Tina Smith, Christopher A. Coons, Amy Klobuchar, Jon Tester.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Robert McKinnon Califf, of North Carolina, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "nay."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 45, as follows:

#### [Rollcall Vote No. 54 Ex.]

#### YEAS—49

Baldwin	Heinrich	Romney
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blunt	Hirono	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	Kelly	Shaheen
Burr	King	Sinema
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Cardin	Leahy	Stabenow
Carper	Menendez	Tester
Casey	Merkley	Van Hollen
Collins	Murkowski	Warner
Coons	Murphy	Warnock
Cortez Masto	Murray	Warren
Duckworth	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Durbin	Padilla	Wyden
Feinstein	Peters	
Gillibrand	Reed	

#### NAYS—45

Barrasso	Hagerty	Portman
Blackburn	Hassan	Risch
Blumenthal	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Braun	Inhofe	Sanders
Cassidy	Johnson	Sasse
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lee	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lummis	Shelby
Crapo	Manchin	Sullivan
Cruz	Markey	Thune
Daines	Marshall	Tillis
Ernst	McConnell	Tuberville
Fischer	Moran	Wicker
Grassley	Paul	Young

#### NOT VOTING—6

Capito	Hoeven	Luján
Graham	Kennedy	Toomey

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 45.

The motion is agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Cloture having been invoked, the Senate will now proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Robert McKinnon Califf, of North Carolina, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. I would ask consent to speak as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise this evening to talk about Black History Month and, in particular, to talk about a program that my office has been presenting every February for many years now.

Each February, it has been my privilege to honor several Pennsylvanians as part of the celebration of Black History Month. This year, we pay tribute to four esteemed Pennsylvanians who have helped their community and the Commonwealth build resilience.

And I will list them first, and then I will be talking about each of them in greater detail: First, Tyrone Holmes, from my hometown of Scranton, PA; Della Clark of Philadelphia, PA; Julius Boatwright of Pittsburgh; and Theo Braddy of Harrisburg—all Pennsylvanians. And their work is demonstrative of this year's theme for our program: "Resilience in the Face of Adversity."

As their persistence and strength has helped their communities surmount significant difficulties this year, their enduring leadership is an encouragement to me after a year where, sadly, resilience has been sorely needed throughout our Commonwealth and throughout our country.

Now, in some ways, we have made some progress in the last year. Just consider this: The national economy created 6.7 million jobs, the most ever in the first year of a Presidency. Pennsylvania's unemployment rate went way down from 7.1 to 5.4. Tens of thousands of jobs have been added just in Pennsylvania. Wages are up, and child poverty is down. The number of fully vaccinated Americans has increased from 2 million to 213 million in just the last year. And we have more tools to manage COVID-19 and keep us safe.

And, finally, the number of schools open for in-person learning has skyrocketed from just 46 percent a year ago to now 95 percent of schools. Some believe it is as high as 98 percent.

However, despite those measures of progress, we are still grappling with so much—grappling with a virus that is adaptable and still deadly, especially for people with preexisting health conditions, and even more so for those who are unvaccinated.

And as COVID-19 has lingered, so, too, have the attendant direct effects. Our schools still struggle to teach our kids and to maintain the regularity that is critical to learning.

Our businesses must contend with fluctuating demand and a fragile supply chain. Many of our children have fallen behind on their other critical vaccinations and routine doctor visits. Many children and adults struggle with isolation and pandemic-related mental health challenges.

We know that much of the adverse impact of COVID-19 has been particularly acute for communities of color. In the United States, Black Americans have experienced higher rates of COVID-19 hospitalization and death compared to White Americans. And

Black Americans have had higher levels of COVID-19-related unemployment.

Beyond the pandemic, other challenges remain. Systemic racism persists in our economy, in our schools, in our healthcare system, and, of course, in our criminal justice system, just to mention a few. And even as we strive as a nation to achieve our high ideals of liberty and freedom for all, we must openly acknowledge a history of discrimination and racism and reckon with its present-day manifestations and implications, including disturbing efforts around the country to turn back the clock on voting rights.

It is only the challenges brought about by adversity that occasion the rise of resiliency and the triumphs of the human spirit and of community action that can lift all of us.

The late Member of Congress, Shirley Chisholm, once said:

Leadership is to have the vision for what is necessary and the courage to make it possible.

Leadership is to have the vision for what is necessary and the courage to make it possible.

Following a year of difficult challenges, it is fitting that as part of our Black History Month celebration, we honor innovative, courageous, and enterprising Pennsylvania leaders who have both the vision and the courage to help our communities and our Commonwealth to exhibit resilience in the face of that adversity.

#### TRIBUTE TO TY HOLMES

Mr. President, let me start with Ty Holmes, our first honoree. I am proud to honor Ty as a fellow resident of Scranton, and the President of the Lackawanna branch of the NAACP. Ty Holmes is well known in Scranton as an avid volunteer and advocate for diversity and inclusion through his work with multiple community organizations, including as a Penn State advisory board member, the vice president of the Scranton Rotary, and as a Lackawanna County Democratic Committee member.

Following the death of George Floyd in 2020, community members were inspired to make change in Northeastern Pennsylvania and establish the Lackawanna County NAACP. Since its founding in 2020, this NAACP branch has grown to 131 members. Under Ty Holmes' leadership, the branch is working to be a voice for underrepresented groups and serve as a bridge between them and the broader community in Scranton.

Ty also has a particular interest in bettering the lives of young people in Scranton, leading him to run for the Scranton School Board. This past November, he was elected to the board and sworn in last month. With his election, Ty Holmes becomes the first African American to ever be elected to public office in the city of Scranton. He also serves as a board member for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Youth Shelter, which provides quality emergency shelter and related services to

unaccompanied youth, ages 14 through their high school graduation.

The Northeastern Pennsylvania Youth Shelter has a specific focus on social justice and advocacy and is welcoming to young people from all backgrounds, especially LGBTQ+ youth in the area.

Ty Holmes' life has been one of service, both to his community and to his country. He retired after 25 years of Active Duty in the U.S. military, where he received numerous decorations from both the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Army. He began his military career in 1991 with the Navy and served in various duty stations throughout the South Pacific and the Middle East.

In 2003, he crossed branches and entered the U.S. Army, deploying in the Middle East. He also worked as part of the support and rescue operations in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Through his work with many community organizations and his role on the Scranton School District Board of Directors, Ty continues to build the Scranton institutions that provide support to people and those institutions that lift them up during times of adversity.

So I look forward to seeing Ty Holmes' continuing contributions to my hometown for years to come.

#### TRIBUTE TO DELLA CLARK

Mr. President, our second honoree is Della Clark from Philadelphia, PA. Della Clark is a true community shepherd. I am not the first to recognize Della's exemplary work, and I certainly won't be the last, but I am honored to add my voice to her chorus of admirers. Her work in the city of Philadelphia, particularly in West Philadelphia, has undoubtedly been a saving grace 100 times over.

Della is indefatigable, a true force of nature who has shown true dedication and steadfast leadership.

Since January 1, 1992, Della Clark has served as president of the Enterprise Center. This center supports minority entrepreneurs and underresourced communities and is one of the most trusted organizations in the region to advise and deliver transformative economic development and community wealth-building initiatives.

Under Della's leadership, the Enterprise Center has experienced tremendous growth. Among its accomplishments is its purchase of a dilapidated building at 46th and Market Street in West Philadelphia, which was completely renovated and now serves as the center's state-of-the-art center for business and entrepreneurship.

Additionally, affiliate organizations have been added to the center's portfolio, including the Enterprise Center Community Development Corporation and the Enterprise Center Capital Corporation. Today, the Enterprise Center is leading a project that will be transformative for the city of Philadelphia—the 52nd Street Initiative.

This commercial corridor along 52nd Street in West Philadelphia has been

an important historical and cultural hub, but unfortunately has seen significant decline and recent disinvestment just over the last number of years.

Further exacerbating the already existing troubles for business owners and residents, the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest have made recovery and revitalization challenging at best. The Enterprise Center has a bold vision for this 52nd Street Initiative, which will transform this street—52nd Street—into a national model for integrating technology to improve public safety, enhance visitor experience, and support businesses and residents.

With Della Clark at the helm, I am confident she will move mountains to see to it that this project reaches its full potential and that this vital neighborhood and its residents can thrive once again.

Della Clark speaks eloquently—yet fiercely—on the importance of investing in Black and Brown businesses and is a tireless advocate for equitable distribution of and access to resources and capital. For that, I thank her for being a champion, a leader, and a true servant for her community.

#### TRIBUTE TO JULIUS BOATWRIGHT

Mr. President, in Southwestern Pennsylvania, our third honoree is Julius Boatwright. Not only has the pandemic taken a toll on the Nation's physical health, but many Americans struggle with mental health challenges, particularly isolation and grief. Julius Boatwright knows that good mental health is fundamental, foundational, to overall well-being.

He has made delivering critical mental health services his life's work. At a time when the pandemic has left many Americans feeling isolated, alone, and depressed, Julius's mission has renewed urgency.

In his work as a licensed social worker, community-based therapist, and outpatient therapist, Julius Boatwright has led with profound vulnerability and understanding. His passion for mental health is derived from a deeply personal place. Julius has bravely discussed his own mental health struggles in an effort to open up a conversation about mental well-being. His experience of growing up in a household and a community where mental health was never talked about planted the desire for him to address silent suffering.

In college, the death of a friend by suicide could have disrupted Julius's journey to becoming a mental health professional. Instead, this deeply personal challenge spurred him onward. He would go on to earn a bachelor's degree in communications and a master's of social work, with a certificate in human services management, from the University of Pittsburgh, as well as establish the Pittsburgh-based nonprofit Steel Smiling.

Julius is now the founding and managing director of Steel Smiling. The organization's mission is to bridge the gap between Black people and mental